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ABSTRACT

The response of the Teacher Corps project schools to the mandates of P.L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) is reported. Changes in school based organization and management stemming from the legislation are divided into three categories: (1) general school types of procedures, including such areas as evaluation and assessment of the individual student's program and progress and evaluation of home/school relationships; (2) intervention team types of procedures, among which are such practices as team selection and better utilization of personnel; and (3) special education types of procedures, which initiate due process, formulate the individualized educational programs, format program implementation, and establish progress reporting. Implications for the teacher corps are considered in the areas of staff development and the determination of school needs. (PHR)

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EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AS CONTINUOUS PROCESS

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The advent of P.L. 94-142 ushered in a new era in the way in which schools identify, program for, and deliver services to students with special needs including the gifted. As educators intensify the precise procedures for identifying, planning for, and programming for these students they are finding that all of these processes are receiving careful scrutiny by parents and community. Individual roles and responsibilities have become more clearly delineated. The resources available to provide for the kinds of services that are mandated through legislation are being more carefully explained. There also appears to be a greater interest in the processes by which educators develop the additional skills that will enable them to better integrate students with special needs into regular classrooms. Concomitantly, there are movements in different arenas of education to determining ways in which regular educators can be more effective with students exhibiting a broader range of variability in the regular classrooms. Teacher Corps is one of the educational programs that is involved in the effort of expanding the skills of general educators so that they in turn will be better prepared to work with students with learning and behavior problems in the regular classrooms.

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Several important questions regarding recent changes resulting from legislative mandates are presently of concern to individuals in decision making positions and include the following:

1. What effect, if any, has P.L. 94-142 had on the reorganization of school procedures and the changing roles of educators?
2. How have recent events in the implementation of P.L. 94-142 affected the learning climates of schools in general?
3. What effect has P.L. 94-142 had on the whole process of information sharing in schools between special educators and general educators?
4. Has there been any indications of institutional (school) impact in terms of a generalized effect on classroom management, behavioral management, curriculum modification, or student assessment procedures?
5. What evidence is there after two years of implementation for the justification of the legislation?

SCHOOL BASED ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

One effect of P.L. 94-142 on Teacher Corps project schools is that many schools have developed strategies by which they are identifying critical areas of need particularly in the area of in-service training. Administrators in many areas of the country have

developed organizational and management strategies which have been effective in meeting their school's specific goals and objectives for mainstreaming students with special needs. Although there are many school systems that have yet to be approved as being in full compliance with the legislation, there are many that have installed practices and procedures that go beyond compliance and that in fact represent quality education. Forward looking school systems for example are beginning to examine ways to generalize the concepts inherent in the process of individual educational planning for the handicapped to every student in the schools. Teacher Corps must begin to extrapolate best practices from individual education planning procedures in the areas of the student with special needs and seek ways to install these practices as a part of the process of educating all students. The extended application of these concepts it is felt is directly related to Teacher Corps involvement in how the feeder schools are organized and managed.

Continuum of Educational Services

Administrators in several Teacher Corps projects are examining procedures by which their schools are providing services for all students with "unmet needs." By analyzing these procedures, they have been able to plan for the more appropriate utilization of school resources to improve present procedures, and to develop new procedures in areas where they were deemed lacking. It is suggested that schools begin to plan for a "full service system" that is

based on a continuum of educational services.

The Exceptional Child Demonstration Project at the University of Miami, after reviewing a selection of Teacher Corps programs geographically distributed throughout the United States, found that procedures for dealing with students with unmet needs are essentially delineated into three levels of service:

1. Level 1 General School Types of Procedures
2. Level 2 Intervention Team Types of Procedures
3. Level 3 Special Education Types of Procedures

LEVEL 1 GENERAL SCHOOL TYPES OF PROCEDURES

Level I procedures are general school processes that occur on a day to day basis in response to the need for ways to educate students with unmet needs. The students within this level of service are defined as having unmet needs primarily due to a discrepancy in academic performance between themselves and their peers. Some exhibit maladaptive behavior to the extent that it interferes with learning. Schools respond to these students by:

1. Reevaluating the student's program assignment.
2. Assessing the student's progress in curriculum areas (usually by norm referenced types of evaluations).
3. Determining the student's behavior patterns.
4. Evaluating home-school relationships.
5. Reviewing the student's background and educational history.

Some form of consultation or contact with the parents or guardians occurs. This includes combinations of individuals representing teachers, administrators, and others in school service areas.

Suggestions for approaches to deal with the student is a primary outcome of this process. These could include:

1. Additional informal and/or formal assessment.
2. Further consultation with school support personnel (e.g. reading, counseling, etc.).
3. Modification of the curriculum and instructional program.
4. Initiation of a home-school management program.
5. Change in academic placement.

Should these procedures be found to be ineffective, depending upon critical episodes, and deterioration of learning and behavior which tests the tolerance levels of teachers beyond limits, there is a reassessment. In most cases it was found where General School Procedures were not successful, students were referred directly for Special Education Procedures (Level 3). Referral and placement often results from one teacher's inability to cope with the student's learning style, conduct, or both in the regular class setting. Some Teacher Corps project schools have initiated some type of Level 2 Intervention procedures prior to referral for Special Education services.

LEVEL 2 INTERVENTION TEAM TYPES OF PROCEDURES

Level 2 types of programs provide procedures that bridge an apparent gap between Level 1 (General School Procedures) and Level 3 (Special Education Procedures). Examples of Level 2 kinds of intervention include:

1. Programs for "high risk" children in elementary schools as a prevention-intervention procedure.
2. Re-entry programs in senior high schools for delinquent youth.
3. Establishment of "School Intervention Teams" or "Pupil Service Teams" that attempt to resolve student problems as part of the general school procedures.

In schools where Level 2 Intervention types of procedures were installed and found to be effective, the following cogent practices or model building elements were extrapolated:

1. In most cases programs were initiated, participants selected, and meetings convened by the principal of the school or his designate.
2. The intervention teams were comprised of the referring teacher and other selected staff. The makeup of the team was based on the needs of the student and the complexity of the problem.
3. In several programs students were assigned designated case workers and/or ombudsmen. These case workers did not have to be the student's teacher, but individuals

who would make sure that the "pieces" were put together. They would contact the student on a continuous basis as well as in times of need.

4. Meetings were held on either a formal or informal basis. Strategies were developed to deal with the variable of "time", especially the time necessary for people to come together. Some programs responded to this concern by developing a special form for more effective communication. The teachers and administrators would indicate problems on the form as it was circulated, and suggest which staff members needed to meet together to resolve specific concerns. It was found that "everyone" on the team did not necessarily have to meet on a formal basis.
5. More effective utilization of support personnel was evident (e.g., reading, counseling, resource teachers, etc.) In some programs the special education person also functioned in the role of consultant. This is an especially important role given the mandate that regular and special educators must work together and accept shared responsibility for students with special needs.

One of the primary outcomes of this type of intervention was more specific kinds of input for programming purposes prior to referral for special education services. Some of the outcomes of Level 2 Intervention Procedures included:

1. Suggestions for additional criterion referenced assessment such as the use of observation devices which can

be used by teachers and school support staff (e.g., reading, counseling, resource teachers, etc.)

2. More precise ways to modify the instructional and curriculum program.
3. Additional suggestions for ways to improve the school-home management program.
4. Careful documentation of the student's progress and behavior. Careful record keeping and dating of observed behavior at this level was a cogent departure from Level 1 type of procedures.

Only after responses to Level 2 kinds of procedures were found to be ineffective were special education procedures implemented. Level 2 procedures provide a means by which schools can begin to reduce unnecessary referrals for special education services. In some cases, referral to special education services occur as an outcome of intervention type procedures with team recommendations.

As school and home become involved in providing for the needs of students through continuum of services procedures, there tends to be a greater degree of trust established. Individuals need to have more opportunities to communicate with each other and to work together in trying to resolve particular problems prior to the formalized meetings which are a part of special education procedures.

It was observed that Level 2 intervention types of procedures provide an opportunity for special educators, general educators, Teacher Corps staff, and support personnel to work together as part of the total regular school program.

LEVEL 3 SPECIAL EDUCATION TYPES OF PROCEDURES

Level 3 Special Education Procedures are generally prescribed by school systems in keeping with regulations that are for the most part monitored by state agencies through a system of compliance officers. However, all basically contain the same ingredients. The following is a sequence of activities that represents most Level 3 types of procedures:

1. Initiate due process procedures and determine eligibility.
2. Develop IEP and determine placement.
3. Develop shared responsibility for program implementation: Special and Regular Education.
4. Establish continuous progress reporting and periodic review.

Administrators are finding that the process involved in developing IEPs can become the focus for formulating judgments about many aspects of compliance with the law. These written records are becoming the basis by which disputes between schools and home can be resolved. IEP development for the most part is basically a management system and the procedures generally follow as a condition of the major legislative requirement that includes adequate assessment, placement in least restrictive environments, parental involvement, and procedural concerns.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER CORPS

1. Staff Development

As we review the components of Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 procedures, we find certain common elements that lead us to conclude that there is a need for developing generic competencies for all educators whether they are responsible for students with unmet needs in regular classrooms or participants in programs where children with special needs are being integrated into least restrictive environments. All levels of program procedures appear to require the same kind of competencies. The following are suggested areas for further training for all educators:

a. Educators need to be able to communicate effectively with parents and other people in the community and to develop home management programs. These basic skills apply in the regular classroom on a daily basis (Level 1) as well as to those who need to be responsive to parents of handicapped children because these students have been integrated into the regular classes in keeping with least restrictive environment imperatives.

b. There especially is a need for good classroom management skills which include the organization of the physical environment and instructional materials as well as knowledge of different types of personnel organization patterns such as team teaching and individual guided instruction, etc.

c. A need for skills in criterion referenced testing is essential for relating behavioral objectives to instruction and curriculum. Teachers who expand their skill base in this area will not only be more effective in terms of integrating students with special needs into their regular classrooms but in effect they will become more responsive to the needs of all students.

d. Teachers who develop a system of continuous progress evaluation that can be implemented with large groups of children should be more effective teachers.

e. Basic skills in the use of good behavior management approaches have applications at all levels of program procedures. An understanding of the technology of behavioral management along with the characteristics of different types of students will enable general educators to be more receptive and responsive to students' needs.

f. Teachers who develop skills in ways to modify existing curriculum and adapt materials or develop new materials will be more effective with all their students. There is a need to dispel the mystique that teaching children with learning and behavior problems is very different from teaching others.

Finally, general educators need to gain an understanding of the whole concept of what "handicapped" means to our society. They need to be involved in the decision making process regarding placement and programming and have opportunities to express their feelings. They need to learn something about the characteristics of the students and be encouraged to emphasize the strengths as well as to respond to the weaknesses of the learners. Many educators are being expected to respond to mandates and regulations without understanding the full implication of their role in the process and their potential for growth and for the improvement of education in general.

2. Determining School Needs

Administrators in Teacher Corps projects can review the various components of the school based organization and management procedures suggested for a continuum of education services with their staff to determine which areas are in fact a part of existing school programs. Those that are installed and need to be modified can be expanded. New dimensions can be added to existing areas as well as a determination made of areas that need to be developed if they do not presently exist. The parameters indicated can serve as a basis for evaluating various components of existing systems as well as utilized as a management and organization tool for planning new programs.